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Spy war nets 13th suspect

By Sam Meddis
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The USA's spy war reached record numbers Tuesday with the arrest of a Northrop Corp. engineer accused of trying to sell "stealth" bomber technology to the Soviets.

Thomas Patrick Cavanagh, 40, of Downey, Calif., an engineer with Northrop's Advanced Systems Division, is the 13th person facing spy charges since 1983. Charged in other cases: An FBI agent and a former CIA worker.

"We have more people charged with espionage right now than ever before in our history," said FBI Director William H. Webster.

The chief reasons: More aggressive counterintelligence by the USA and stronger efforts by Eastern bloc nations to steal high-tech secrets.

"It's an escalation on each side," said FBI Assistant Director Bill Baker.

Said Allan E. Goodman, associate dean of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service: "It certainly shows how vigorous the Reagan administration is in pushing counterintelligence."

John K. Greaney, of the Association of Former Intelligence Agents, said, "When you had a policy of detente, I don't think you had too many espionage cases."

USA military technology is a big espionage target because the Soviets know it is "superior to their own," said former CIA Director Richard Helms.

Cavanagh, who is being held without bail, is accused of asking FBI agents — posing as Soviet officials — to give him \$25,000 for the supersecret technology that cost the USA billions of dollars to produce.

Webster said transfer of the documents — classified technical manuals, blueprints, drawings and a list of subcontractors — could have caused "irreparable damage" to the USA.

A secret project to build a plane not detectable by radar has been going on for years.

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